

The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying. —John Flavel

It is not hard to deceive ministers, relatives, and friends. But it is impossible to deceive Christ. — J.C. Ryle

### The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbids all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God makes Himself known.

(Malachi 1:6-7; Lev. 20:3; 19:12; Matt. 5:34-37; Isa. 52:5)

Q. 62. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that howsoever the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape His righteous judgment.

(Deut. 28:58-59; Malachi 2:2)

#### THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM— In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

# THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

## THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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### PRAYING FOR JOY

*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:23-24)*

To the question, “do we deserve to be happy?” we must answer with a resounding “no!” But we must conclude that the desire for happiness was built into the nature of man from the beginning. Else, why would it be set forth in various places as something to be sought after and something to be lamented when it is lost. Should we desire happiness, or should we pray for joy? The Scriptures point us that way. Here it is set forth as an object of prayer along with all else. It is evident that all human attempts to attain to a state of happiness and to experience true joyfulness fail miserably. The word used here is *chara* which we recognize as connected with charisma or charismatic. Strong uses such words a *cheerfulness* and *gladness*. That which the Lord placed here as an object in praying speaks of that which is felt in the heart and expressed in the life. It should be apparent that this is gladness regarding the things of the Lord.

C. S. Lewis wrote: On happiness – What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like Gods’ – could set up on their own as if they had created themselves – be their own masters – invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history – money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery – the long terrible story of man trying to find

something other than God which will make him happy. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself because it is not there. There is no such thing.” It may well be that there has been no time in history when men were so bent on obtaining pleasure and pursuing their own way as we are witnessing today. Yet, misery abounds on every hand and anything, but joy prevails. Lewis had it exactly right – genuine happiness and true joy can only be found with God in Christ.

The divine design calls for us to have joy now and to see it increase forevermore. We must be careful that our attempts to be self-effacing contribute to our joy rather than to replace it. This text gives us a clear objective and that is full joy. Our Lord expresses purpose in those words. Grace teaches us in the way that true joy may be had. We know how it is not to be had. In Paul’s epistle to Titus, he wrote of the grace that appears to all, *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (Titus 2:12)*. This is the character of a Spirit-filled life wherein joy is not denied; it is rather facilitated.

The nature of life in the Kingdom of God is clearly set before us as a present reality. That is, although we look for a city “whose builder and maker” is God, we are enabled to enjoy the rule and reign of Christ in our lives in this world. Paul

wrote of this very thing in drawing the Romans away from legalism and human customs. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. (Romans 14:17-18)*. Righteousness is that which is directed toward God and certainly speaks of rectitude or being upright and identifiable by others as serving Him. We are ever reminded of the words of our Lord: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33)*. Of Peace, we may understand peace with God, the peace of God in our hearts, and concord with each other and our neighbor – the nature of our relationship with one another. But joy is to ourselves and is experienced inwardly. Joy provides a very precious context for all that we know of the gracious provisions of our God. It is thinking and acting as under the workings of the Spirit and such joy is seen as spiritual and is visible to all about us. Our countenance will either reflect its presence or its absence.

John Gill wrote of joy as that which the Spirit produces, “...by leading us to a sight of Christ, and an interest in Him and His atonement.” John MacArthur referred to this joy as “...an abiding attitude of praise and thanksgiving regardless of circumstances, which flows from one’s confidence in God’s sovereignty.”

We are reminded here that the Apostles were being prepared for our Lord’s physical departure from them. That day was coming in which they would not have Him physically present with them. Yet, they were being

commissioned to preach the Gospel and the task before them was great. While there is no doubt that they had many questions, but to this point they had simply followed Him. There was much that they would need in the years to come in the way of resources both physical and spiritual. So, He instructs them to ask for it in His name. In asking they would receive full joy in the process.

Paul anticipated rejoicing: *Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Philippians 2:16)*. We consider John’s own joy as he wrote, *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. (2 John 1:12)*. His objective was the joy of those to whom he wrote: *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

*(1 John 1:4)*. Isaiah preciously wrote, “*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...*”. Joy was seen by Paul as an objective of his ministry. To the Corinthians he wrote: *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. (2 Corinthians 1:24)*.

The thought expressed in this text has been abused by many. We are to be asking after those things that pertain to the glory of God and the exaltation of Christ our Lord. We are to do all in His name and certainly we are to ask in the same way. The promise here is full joy, and we would pray for it. *bhs*

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## THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Jesus exercises supreme authority over the entire universe. Just before his ascension he said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18). He is not hoping to be in charge; he rules supremely now. The world’s sidelining of his authority does nothing to reflect the reality of that authority. From heaven’s perspective, everything is going according to plan. Jesus Christ is

overseeing all that happens, both in the church and in world history at large. Our perception of and ability to see his rule may wax and wane; but that's perception only. His actual rule holds steady—supreme, strong, exhaustive, all-seeing. No drug deal goes down apart from his awareness, no political scandal unfolds beyond the reach of his vision, no injustice can be exacted behind his back. When today's world leaders gather together, they themselves are held in the hand of a risen Galilean carpenter. This supreme reign holds true not only for the cosmos and for world history but also for your own little life. He sees you. He knows you. Nothing is hid from his gaze. You will be judged one day not according to what was visible to others but according to what you really were and did. The Bible says that when Jesus comes to judge the world, he “will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart” (1 Cor. 4:5). Not only what we did in secret, but even our very motives will be laid bare and judged. We may not see Jesus with our eyes. But he is the most real thing in the universe. The Bible says that “in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Subtract Jesus from the universe, and everything falls apart. He is not a bobblehead Savior, to be smiled at and merely added to an otherwise well-oiled life. He is the mighty sustainer of the universe, to whose supreme rule we will bow the knee in either this life or the next (Phil. 2:10). – Dane C. Ortlund, *Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners*

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#### TRIALS MAKE US GROW UP

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. —James 1:2–4 This passage gives us another way to think about the temptations we face. The word translated “trials” here is the same word translated “temptations” in 1 Corinthians 10:13 (above). Not only does God protect us from temptations we cannot bear; He also uses those temptations to help us to mature. We would all love to be able to say that we lack nothing—that we are perfect and complete. We would like the Lord to say that we have nothing missing in our lives. But we can arrive at that state only through pain. We cannot be mature without developing patience, and we cannot develop patience without passing through difficult experiences that test our faith. That is why James says you should count it all joy when you fall into various trials—when you face temptations and tests of your faith. You are being strengthened in those trials by the development of spiritual endurance. – John MacArthur

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Psalm 127:2 is perhaps the Bible's signature statement on sleep: “It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.” God gives sleep as an expression of his love.

--David Mathis, *Rich Wounds*